

Inspection of The Deanes

Daws Heath Road, Thundersley, Benfleet, Essex SS7 2TD

Inspection dates: 12–13 September 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a friendly place to go to school. Pupils are well behaved. They listen to their teachers and get on well with each other in their free time. Pupils told us that it is fine to be different. They said that bullying is unusual and, if it does happen, adults deal with it well.

Pupils and staff explained that behaviour is much better than it used to be. There are two main reasons for this. First, all adults apply the policies for managing pupils' behaviour consistently. Pupils know what they are allowed to do, and what they are not. Second, leaders talk to pupils who misbehave and try to solve the underlying cause of their poor behaviour.

There are plenty of things for pupils to get involved with. For example, there are theatre trips and yoga classes, and trips to France and to the Himalayas. Pupils get the opportunity to debate ideas, to hear from visitors and to learn a wide range of new skills, including first aid.

Leaders want all pupils to do well. Leaders' actions have made sure that the school is getting better in some areas, for example in pupils' behaviour and attitudes. However, the quality of education that pupils receive is not as good as it should be.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Despite recent improvements, some parts of the curriculum are not developed well, and pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Curriculum plans for science and mathematics, for example, have been reviewed recently. Over time, pupils have not learned as much as they should have in either of these subjects. Teachers of mathematics and science do not know enough about what pupils have learned in the past. This makes it hard for teachers to choose how and when to teach different topics.

Pupils do not complete the key stage 3 curriculum in sufficient depth to achieve well. In order to start key stage 4 early, pupils finish studying some subjects before they have learned enough about them. Leaders do not have effective ways to find out what pupils have learned during key stage 3.

Some subjects are well planned and taught. For instance, in music, pupils learn in a sensible order so that their knowledge and skills develop well over time. In English, much has recently been done to improve what is taught, when it is taught, and how it is taught.

The experience of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) varies from subject to subject. They achieve the most in subjects where there are high expectations for all pupils. As with other pupils, their education is weaker

where planning and teaching have not been good enough over time.

Pupils' good behaviour and attitudes help them to achieve. Pupils listen well in lessons and are quick to respond to teachers' instructions. Where they are taught well, they are keen to learn. Even where teaching is weaker, pupils listen, work and behave appropriately.

Leaders make sure that pupils receive comprehensive advice and guidance to help them choose their next steps after school. Leaders' carefully planned programme includes activities such as mock interviews, discussions about different types of careers and speakers visiting the school. Pupils are well-prepared to make informed decisions about their career paths.

The school's work supports pupils to be self-confident and to develop strength of character. This is well exemplified by the fortnightly 'challenger' lessons. Leaders know it is difficult for some pupils to stay after school, but they want everyone to have lots of interesting experiences. Leaders therefore timetable these innovative sessions during the school day. In the sessions, pupils learn about topics such as mountain biking, sign language and archery. In other lessons, assemblies and events, pupils find out about many different features of society and the world.

Leaders are successful in caring for the well-being of staff. Leaders make sure staff maintain a work-life balance. Staff say that they appreciate, for example, leaders' insistence on no emails being sent after 6.00pm. One response to the survey for staff captured the essence of others' views, describing 'considerate leadership'. Staff enjoy working at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders maintain an effective record of their checks on the suitability of adults who work in the school. They keep records about concerns relating to pupils' welfare in good order. Leaders have a thorough programme of training to ensure that staff know how to keep pupils safe.

Leaders make sure that pupils are taught to keep safe through, for example, assemblies and personal, social, health and citizenship education. The good work to promote tolerance and respect keeps pupils safe from bullying and discrimination.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is narrowed at key stage 3. Pupils do not have access to the full range of subject content to which they are entitled. Too much focus is given to teaching key stage 4 content early. Leaders need to make sure that the

curriculum at key stage 3 is at least as broad and ambitious as the national curriculum.

- In some subjects, such as science and mathematics, the revised plans for what pupils should learn are very new. Over time, pupils have not learned the content of these subjects well enough. Leaders need to ensure that new curriculum plans are used well to ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, learn the essential knowledge they need for each subject they study.
- Assessment is not used as well as it should be. In science and mathematics, teachers lack clarity over what knowledge pupils have already gained. Assessment systems across key stage 3 do not give leaders useful information on what, or how well, pupils have learned. Leaders need to ensure that methods of assessment across the school give them and teachers the information they need to plan for what pupils still need to be taught.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	143639
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10110189
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	519
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Frank Green
Headteacher	Desi McKeown
Website	www.thedeanes.academy
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The Deanes opened as an academy in October 2016.
- The school makes use of the following alternative providers: Victory Park Academy; BEP Academy; Children’s Support Service, Langdon Hills; Children’s Support Service Hadleigh; Children’s Support Service, Fairview; Children’s Support Service, Reintegration; and Southend YMCA community school.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors visited classes in a range of subjects. We looked in detail at science, English, mathematics and music, meeting with curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils. We visited lessons and reviewed pupils’ work in these subjects. In addition, we spoke with pupils and teachers about different aspects of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, school senior leaders and leaders of the trust, including the chief executive officer. We spoke with the chair of the trust and members of the local governing body as well as meeting with the local authority school effectiveness partner.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders’ evaluation of

the school, improvement plans and safeguarding records. We considered the school's information on pupils' attendance and behaviour, and reviewed minutes of local governing body meetings.

- Inspectors considered the 106 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the 105 responses to the free-text option. Inspectors also took into account the responses of the 52 staff who completed Ofsted's survey of staff views, and the 85 responses to Ofsted's pupils' survey. Inspectors considered a letter received about the school during the inspection.

Inspection team

Andrew Hemmings, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sue Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Gerard Batty	Ofsted Inspector

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